

Prevention

- This year, the U.S. will spend more than \$2.2 trillion on health care and only 3-4% of it will be spent on prevention.
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is the nation's primary prevention agency with a budget of \$8.4 billion. The National Institutes for Health (NIH) spends another \$7 billion on prevention research.
- More than a quarter of CDC's budget goes to immunization programs: \$2.5 billion. Fighting infectious diseases takes a \$1.7 billion budget. CDC's investment in health promotion to address chronic diseases is less than a billion dollars: \$963.4 million in FY2006.
- Federal messaging should target screening and a few lifestyle behaviors: exercise, nutrition, and smoking cessation. The U.S. spends \$132 billion each year on diabetes treatment and we'll spend \$403 billion on cardiovascular disease, the nation's number one killer. Both diseases are largely preventable through the right diet and exercise.
- Americans need to be empowered to take ownership of their health. Individuals—not insurance company or government bureaucrats—are in the best position to take responsibility for their own lifestyle decisions.
- The role of prevention has been important since the very beginning of our nation. Benjamin Rush (another physician-politician and signer of the Declaration of Independence) routinely posted notices about how to recognize the symptoms of typhoid and yellow fever in the Army. As early as 1813, Congress passed an act authorizing the President to make vaccine matter available to the citizens of the United States.
- Today's public health threats aren't just infectious diseases, they are chronic diseases that are largely preventable.
- Prevention is critical to saving money in our health care system, but more importantly to saving lives.